

Air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions : EC trading system.Green Paper

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The committee adopted the report by Jorge MOREIRA DA SILVA (EPP-ED, P) on the Commission Green Paper on greenhouse gas emissions trading within the EU. The committee supported the idea of setting up an emissions trading scheme in 2005, but wanted to see this go hand in hand with other, more ambitious, policies and measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in keeping with the objectives laid down in the Kyoto Protocol. The committee emphasised that the EU emission trading system would be a domestic policy for reducing EU emissions and should be distinct from a Kyoto Protocol emission trading scheme. It reaffirmed its position that at least 50% of the Kyoto commitments should be fulfilled through local measures and that emissions trading, like the other flexible mechanisms, should be no more than a supplementary instrument at international level. A Community-wide scheme on emissions trading was justified by the need to protect the environment and to create equal conditions of competition in the internal market, and would also help reduce the overall costs of meeting the EU's Kyoto target. Quantified greenhouse gas abatement targets should be set for emissions trading in the EU in advance, per country and per sector, and such targets should ensure a level playing field. The applicant countries should also be involved in the scheme as soon as possible. The committee was critical of certain shortcomings in the Green Paper, such as the failure to gauge the risk of creating competitive advantages for nuclear energy which might arise from the selection of the sectors covered by emissions trading. The nuclear power capacity installed in the EU might actually increase in future unless greater priority was given to other measures, such as rational energy use, development of renewable energy sources, etc. It also regretted that no real ideas had emerged as to the best way of allocating emission allowances, even though this was crucial to the future shape of the trading scheme.